

VZCZCXYZ0017  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHGB #0223 0281656  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 281656Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6338  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000223

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2020  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: ALLAWI THREATENS ELECTION BOYCOTT IF  
DE-BA'ATHIFICATION ISSUE LEFT UNRESOLVED

REF: BAGHDAD 212

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Yuri Kim for Reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador underscored to PM Maliki on January 28 the importance of ensuring that the resolution of the de-Ba'athification controversy is concluded in a manner and timeframe that ensures due process and full participation by all qualified Iraqi voters and candidates. According to Maliki, Chief Justice Medhat expected the Cassation Chamber to have reviewed and decided "in the next day or two" all 300-odd appeals by excluded candidates. (Ambassador's meeting with PM Maliki reported septel.) Medhat, however, told us separately that there were now more than 400 cases and that it would take more than a day or two to review and decide all cases.

¶2. (C) Even as the legal appeals process moves forward with general political acquiescence, those who fear their cases might not be heard in time have upped the ante. Pressed by Saleh al-Mutlaq, former PM and Iraqiyya coalition head Ayad Allawi stated publicly January 28 that Iraqiyya -- which has 70 names, including Mutlaq's on the list of disqualified -- would call for all Iraqis to boycott the national elections if candidates excluded from the elections by IHEC were not reinstated. Iraqi media quoted Allawi as saying (and Iraqiyya MP Maysoon al-Damluji confirmed) that the boycott would include "all members of the coalition" and that Iraqiyya would "ask the Iraqi people to boycott the elections" and "ask the United Nations not to recognize the legitimacy of the elections." It was not clear how well coordinated Iraqiyya is on the boycott issue. Iraqiyya Parliamentary bloc leader, Sheikh Jamal al-Batikh, was surprised when informed of the statement by Poloff, adding that any final decision to boycott would have to be reviewed carefully by all coalition members. At the same time, he stated that restoring Mutlaq to the candidate list was Allawi's "top priority" and that it was very important for everyone who wanted to run be allowed to do so. Poloff emphasized that the United States strongly believed a boycott would harm the Iraqi people.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Allawi, DPM Rafi'e al-Issawi, and even Mutlaq himself have told us that 2005 taught them that a boycott is not in the interest of the Sunnis or secularists. Allawi's statement is likely more an attempt to appease Mutlaq than a real threat to pull out of the election. Still, there is genuine frustration and concern, and we are weighing in with key figures, including Mutlaq, to prevent a further escalation in political rhetoric or complication of efforts to resolve the de-Ba'athification issue. Moreover, we will need to keep a close tab to ensure that the legal process moves forward in a satisfactory manner. END COMMENT.  
HILL